/7 cont./

127 Droeba 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

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I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

●142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender, swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and
181 proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

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The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia during the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point beyond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

[751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

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Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

[751 cont.]
A 142 is somewhat flattened, the nose short, straight or arched, the color of the face pale brown, and that of the eyes, hair, and beard dark brown to black. Blue eyes and light hair are rare. A [143] The southern Samurzakhan show admixture with Georgians (Mingrel); they are taller, more powerfully built, and have more delicate features.

C 142 The Cherkess (see Fig. 442) are taller than the Abkhaz, slender, and have broad shoulders and narrow hips. The skull is of medium size and pear-shaped, the nose thin and straight. The face is oval; the hair and eyes are brown. The girls and young women are famous for their beauty.

A 2 181 The Cherkess are proud, vengeful, cunning, insolent, good fighters, indefatigable on horseback and on foot, certain marksmen, and were formerly notorious as savage bandits. The

C 291 142 302 411

Fig. 442. Cherkess (From R. v. Erckert)

A 291 ● 142

[752 cont.]

Fig. 443. Abkhaz Woman

C 411 [439] octagonal damascened barrel, in earlier times imported from Bakhchisarai in the Crimea, in a sheath of skin, leather, or felt (see Fig. 451, 1), or a knout (see Fig. 451, 8, 10). Earlier it also included (see Fig. 445) a shirt of mail (affé) with a cotton lining, [Fig. 444 appears here] [753] arm bands (abkhumbukh), hand guard (aŝteld), helmet (taŝ) or skullcap (kip'a), battle-ax, javelin with barbs, bow, quiver, and arrows. Only the nobles were permitted to use white eagle feathers for feathering the arrows.

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C [564]

A 291 The parts of the women's costume are (see Fig. 446): a thin shirt of red silk (kanaŭs) with long sleeves, over that an undergarment of striped silk with sleeves that are narrow at the top, wide at the bottom, and pleated, over it a bodice with [Fig. 445 appears here] gold and silver embroidery and lacing of silver balls and plates, and a long coat with a wide richly decorated piece of material set in at each sleeve, pants usually of yellow silk, (formerly among the Abkhaz, white for girls, red for women, blue for widows), leather belt with

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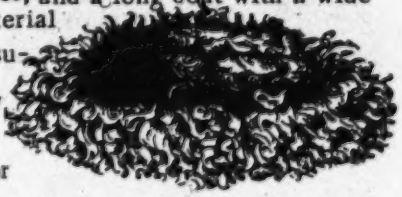

Fig. 444. Kabardin Cap of Lambskin (From Count J. Zichy)